

From collecting stamps to postal history via Peter Feltus, and finally to the social background story of the travelled cover. It has been a fascinating and enjoyable journey of discovery through Egypt's myriad philatelic avenues



Why I collect Egypt – Scott Van Horn (ESC 619) – Michigan, USA

My journey collecting Egypt started when I was perhaps seven or eight years old. My father and grandfather both collected stamps, and they passed this interest on to me. My first exposure was the 1946 Arab League Congress set found in cheap approval packets in the 1960s. I was not thinking about Egypt specifically at the time, I just wanted to collect everything, at least what I could afford on an 8-year old's allowance. Gasoline, girls, and school took over my life a few years later, and the collection was relegated to the closet.

During this interlude I developed a strong passion for Egyptology and even considered a career in that field for a very short time. But once logic and the slim chance of financial stability took over, I just accepted the fact that I could keep that interest as a study hobby and still be completely satisfied.



The Nefertiti stamps - the four highest values of the set at 100m, 200m and 500 millimes, and the £E1 (NP D207-D210), are arguably my favourite issues of the postwar era.

A few years after starting my professional career, and after a couple of trips to Egypt, my father suggested that I take up collecting again. Of course, by this time, the natural focus would be Egypt. I had my parents mail out my old collection and started attending stamp shows in the mid-west United States to fill album spaces. At first I collected nothing but stamps, with a smattering of covers, to the point of completing the entire Scott catalogue. It was at this time that I befriended Peter Feltus, who sent me in a different direction with postmarks and markings, i.e., postal history. My father was making the same journey, but with the postal history of Indiana and 19th-century Britain, so we were able to share a common interest for many years.

Peter had been suggesting that I join the ESC for a while, and offered to sponsor my application. I was hesitant in joining, thinking that I would not be able to contribute much, and that the members were a little too intellectual for my knowledge at the time. After many more years, I finally joined in 2007 and have always regretted that I didn't do so earlier.

My collection of Egypt is wide and varied, and I really don't have a specialty, but I tend to keep my focus on postal history, or more precisely, a social postal history. In other words, what does a cover or envelope tell us about the writer/recipient/place, as well as the postal markings and stamps. I do enjoy writing articles, though I sometimes find it intimidating trying to "compete" with authors doing book-worthy research, but our Editor has been very kind in allowing minor aspects of Egyptian philately to be published in these pages.

I do split my philatelic time, as I also specialize in the postal history of Floyd County, Indiana, and have written an extensive 180-page history of that county for the Indiana Postal History Society.

• We welcome all members' stories in making this column a regular feature of the QC